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S E R M O N

At GUILDHALL CHAPEL,

ON

THE ELECTION OF A LORD MAYOR,

29. SEPTEMBER. 1770,

BY

EAST APTHORP M. A.

VICAR of CROYDON.

Published by Order of the COURT of ALDERMEN.

ÆSCHINES Socratic. Dial. I.

Ὅταν βέλῃται Θεὸς εὖ πράξει πόλιν, ἄνδρας ἀγαθὰς ἐνεποίησεν· ὅταν
 δὲ μέλλῃ κακῶς πράξει πόλιν, ἐξεῖλε τὰς ἄνδρας τὰς ἀγαθὰς ἐκ
 ταύτης τῆς πόλεως ὁ Θεός.

L O N D O N,

Printed for B. WHITE, at HORACE'S HEAD, in Fleet-Street..

MDCCLXX.

[Price One Shilling.]

TRECOTHICK Mayor.

{ Tuesday *the 2d Day of October 1770,*
and in the tenth Year of the Reign
of King GEORGE the Third, of Great
Britain, &c.

IT is Ordered, That the Thanks of this Court be given to the Reverend Mr. ARTHUR, Chaplain to the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor, for his Sermon preached before this Court, and the Liveries of the several Companies of this City, at the *Guildhall Chapel*, on *Saturday the 29th Day of September last*, before the Election of a Lord Mayor of this City for the Year ensuing: And that he be desired to print the same.

H O D G E S.

TO
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
BARLOW TRECOTHICK Esq;
LORD MAYOR:

TO THE
LORD MAYOR ELECT,
THE WORSHIPFUL COURT OF ALDERMEN,
THE RECORDER
AND SHERIFFS

OF
THE CITY OF LONDON,
THIS SERMON

IS
MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED.

TO
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
BARTLOW TRESCOTTHICK ESQ

LORD MAYOR

LORD MAYOR ELECT

THE HONOURABLE COUNCIL OF ALDERMEN

THE HONOURABLE

AND SHERIFFS

THE CITY OF LONDON

THIS IS TO

MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED

A S E R M O N, &c.

ISAIAH LX.

17. *For brags I will bring gold,*

And for iron I will bring silver,

And for wood brags, and for stones iron:

I will also make thy OFFICERS peace,

And thine EXACTORS righteousness. —

21. *Thy PEOPLE also shall be all righteous.*

THE prophetic writings not only attest our holy Religion, by a wonderful display of its fates and fortunes; but also comprehend the essential principles of all true Policy.

Whoever carefully examines in either view this most celebrated of all the prophets, will find an illustrious manifestation of divine prescience; ever watchful over its favourite work, the Christian Faith and Policy, from its beginning to the end of time.

The Prophet, having (from his XLth chapter) described the genius of Christianity and the character of its Author, with the greatest abundance variety and majesty of thought; proceeds, if possible in a sublimer strain, to predict its growing glories and happy consummation [A]. The general argument of these predictions, taken collectively as they relate to the christian Church, describes its Beginnings in the incarnation, character and passion of CHRIST [B]: its original purity, and excellent tendency to redeem reform and bless mankind [C]: its subsequent depravations and corruptions [D]: its reformation and recovery from barbarism tyranny and superstition [E]: its growth and advancement in interior graces and external felicity [F]: its extension and universality [G]: its conflict and victory over all its enemies spiritual and temporal [H]: and the grand result of christianity, the happiness of human society, and the glories of the heavenly state [I].

The immediate argument of the LXth chapter, is to predict that period of the Gospel, when, by the external prevalence and interior efficacy of its doctrines, a state of much

[A] From CHAP. LX to LXVI.

[B] CHAP. VII. 14—16. IX. 6. 7. LII. 13—LIII. LXX.

[C] CHAP. XI. XXXII. LV. LVI. *et passim.*

[D] CHAP. LVI. 9—12. LVII. LVIII. LIX—15.

[E] CHAP. LXX. 16—21.

[F] CHAP. LX. LXI. LXII.

[G] CHAP. XLIX. LI. LIV.

[H] CHAP. XXXIV. LXIII.

[I] CHAP. LXV. 17—25. *et passim.*

The coincidence of these predictions with the history of Christianity, can no other-
wise be accounted for, than by a divine prescience attesting a divine revelation. The
sandid and patient enquirer into the Truth and genius of Revealed Religion will find great
satisfaction in the study of this Prophet with the admirable commentary of VITRINGA.

higher improvement in virtue and general happiness, nearly advancing to perfection itself, shall commence on earth, and never end: a state, so exquisitely described throughout this chapter, that, to give an adequate idea of it, it would be necessary to repeat and comment on the whole: which neither the majesty and extent of the subject, nor the time and business of this meeting, will admit of. I shall therefore confine my thoughts to the text before us, which contains the following assertions or predictive promises of God to man.

I. That the state of Christianity and civil Society shall be always progressive and improving in the world. *For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron.*

II. That the natural and human means and instruments of civil and religious progression and improvement in society, will be the supreme and subordinate Magistrates of Christian States, both ecclesiastical and civil. *I will also make thy Officers peace, and thine Exactors righteousness.*

I.

THE great instrument of divine Providence in forwarding the state of Society, and improving the condition of humanity on earth till the consummation of its happiness in heaven, is The Christian Religion, as contained in H. SS. in its genuine purity. The tendency of this amiable Religion is to produce perfect peace—*quietness and assurance for ever* [K]: and it only fails of this happy effect, in proportion as it is opposed, retarded, or corrupted, by the voluntary perverseness of free-agents; whose liberty God does not mean to over-rule by any system of laws for the regulation of their conduct.

As far as could be consistent with the abuses of human liberty, Christianity hath, not only in its tendency but effects, wrought a most happy change in the world. In its first ages, when it conquered by its sufferings, it abolished the polytheism idolatry and barbarous superstitions and many of the most flagitious and cruel vices of paganism. It induced Humanity into the ancient world; it was friendly to Learning and befriended by it [L]; it extended, sublimed and regulated the spirit of Patriotism by the principle of universal Charity: and the moral and political reformation it effected must appear very surprizing and truly divine to a learned and impartial enquirer.

It must be acknowledged, that the corruptions of this divine scheme of Religion, by the antichristian abuses of it to the purposes of superstition imposture and tyranny, have been almost as great and signal as its benefits. But, as it is a miserable sophism, though a common one, to argue from the abuse against the utility and truth of our Religion: it cannot be denied, that so many and great advantages were derived to Society by the Reformation, as in a good measure to correspond with the ideas of the Prophet in this description [M]: so far at least, as to lead us to expect a fuller completion of it in some future age [N].

II. Much

[L] The Roman Learning, which declined from the death of M. AURELIUS, flourished with the establishment of Christianity by CONSTANTINE. It is well known, that the Revival of Learning and Reformation of Religion advanced together in the XVIth Century. See the late excellent Archbishop SECKER's Sermons. Vol. IV. 157. sequ.

[M] Hoc — pro certo habemus — Prophetiam complecti omnes res, quæ ad Christianam Ecclesiam spectant aut spectare debent, usque ad ultimam mundi senectutem. HOUBIGANT. Lectori, ad Prophetas, p. iv.

[N] Nor is our own age without some favourable circumstances, which may well be considered as in part corresponding to these predictions. The general civility of EUROPE, and

II.

MUCH indeed remains to be done; and much, it is hoped, may be done, by the united efforts of the truly honest; that is, of such as found their Political character on the basis of Religious Principle. From such men, and from such only; either in stations of public trust and authority, or in the narrower sphere of private life; can we hope for any real improvements in national happiness. This assertion is warranted by Inspiration itself, which in the text derives the felicity of some future age from the manners and principles of men in authority, and of the People in general. I WILL MAKE THINE OFFICERS PEACE, AND THINE EXACTORS RIGHTEOUSNESS --- THY PEOPLE ALSO SHALL BE ALL RIGHTEOUS.

The terms are all emphatical: OFFICERS [O], properly of care and superintendency, as of the Ministers of Religion over their Charge: who, in those happy times, shall be and shall enjoy Peace, neither troubling nor troubled, but advancing the piety of the Church by their sanctity of manners and faithfulness of office.

EXACTION [P] is an idea of the Civil Magistracy we should not perhaps expect to find in such a description of a golden age. But the sense is clear and beautiful. Even they, whose office is naturally vexatious to the subject, in those happy times shall exercise it with so much equity and humanity, as not to distress but protect the people. By Exactors then are meant Civil Magistrates in general, supreme or subordinate; and their characteristic, as that of the ecclesiastical

and the humanity of its Monarchs (war alone excepted) together with the great improvements now making in the RUSSIAN Empire more extensive than that of ancient ROME, warrant these hopes in favour of human happiness.

[O] פְּקִדְיָהּ Visitationem tuam.

[P] אֲנִשְׁיָהּ Oppressionem tuam.

government, is expressed by an elegant abstraction, — not only Peaceful, not only Just, but Peace and Righteousness itself; without any mixture of violence, extortion, corruption, or indirection in the One; of ignorance, contention, negligence, or secularity in the Other.

How far this high-wrought portrait of the Prophet resembles any age of Christianity, or our own age and nation in particular; it might be some presumption to enquire. But, as without malignity, so without flattery, we may observe, that few if any times have seen at the head of a great nation a SOVEREIGN more *virtuous*, more *religious*, and in both more *exemplary*, than we are at present blessed with: and nothing is requisite to make those eminent virtues a real blessing to His people, but the imitation and concurrence of all who are in power and authority under Him, to promote their genuine influence.

The true foundation of political virtue is Religious principle. CHRIST, by His sovereign direction, superintends the government of His Church: and the highest powers on earth are subject to Him, either in a state of unavailing hostility apostacy and unbelief; or, in a happy concurrence with His divine administration, faithful and loyal subjects of Him who is the KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. We mean not, by this august title ascribed in H. SS. to the WORD OF GOD, any arrogant pretensions of spiritual or temporal authority vested in churches or ecclesiastics; but solely, the just and supreme dominion of HIM who is *faithful and true and judgeth in righteousness* [Q].

[Q] REVELAT. XIX. 11—16. Vide PSALM 11, cum Commentario J. CLERICI.

It is therefore the Religious Principle of subjection to Christ, united with Public Spirit, which forms that accomplished character, **THE CHRISTIAN PATRIOT**: The disunion of these great qualities is the primary Cause of national discontents; and their friendly co-operation in the hearts of those in Public Stations ever produces public felicity. For, all true Patriotism being founded on the eternal basis of Religious Principle; on this alone will every department of government and magistracy be administered and obeyed with perfect rectitude and integrity. Neither of these principles are singly and separately productive of the highest public good; but both combined and acting in concert. The Religious principle without patriot affection contracts the mind to bigotry, persecution, and wrong ideas of Government: and Patriotism, without Religion to direct its activity, is ever apt to degenerate into Faction.

To illustrate these positions by some great examples of past times: — Was the most enlightened genius with the best intentions, to form an ideal plan of philosophic policy; he would not easily invent a theory more complete, than the actual constitution of **ENGLAND** at the glorious Revolution. Yet, such is the imperfection of human virtue and policy, that the corruption of this admirable frame of mixed government is in a manner coëval with its existence: the very Prince and Administration that formed and established it, having been induced to support it against a disaffected party, by other arts than those of pure Religion, Justice, and Integrity. Had that great and patriot King but trusted only to the rectitude of his measures; his throne would have been *established by righteousness* [R]; and he would have been as invincible

against a domestic faction which molested his whole reign, as he was against the arms of France. But the preferring a political expedient to the eternal strength of integrity, hath intailed on this kingdom an evil ever since increasing, of a more threatening aspect, than either any principle of decay in the constitution itself, or than foreign violence.

When virtuous Princes are afraid to trust to the Rectitude of their measures; and, when a patriot opposition place their whole dependance on the spirit and strength of party, exclusive of Christian principle: the virtues of the one will be unsuccessful to procure public tranquillity; and the efforts of the other will be unavailing to reform the corruptions of the times. Hence, from this partial and ill-founded policy, those portents recorded in the annals of our history: Virtue and Religion at variance with the public weal; and magnanimity, public-spirit and incorruption rendered useless and even pernicious to the state, by a fatal disregard, either to purity of Morals or to the Christian Faith—— which, by the contagion of such examples, come by degrees to lose their hold on the minds of the people.

On pure Religion Justice and Integrity depend the internal strength of government: and all other arts of supporting it, however specious, however well-intended, are, like the clay in the image [S], weakness mixed with strength, and involve the sounder parts in the ruins of the weaker.

All that can or ought to be attempted, to prevent such a Constitution being *broken to pieces together* and becoming like *the chaff of the summer threshing-floors*; is, for those in power

and office, from time to time to clear the State of those dangerous accretions, that may have adhered to it; and reduce it back, with wisdom and moderation, to its primitive model. For this noble work of true Patriotism is not to be effected by great commotions and violent changes in government; but solely by the silent operation of virtuous principle, first in the Magistrate and then in the Subject, producing constant and progressive though perhaps slow and indiscernible improvements in the state of Society: in the figurative style of the Prophet, bringing *for stones Iron, and for wood Brass, for iron Silver, and for brass Gold*. Whatever attempts are made by a spurious Patriotism, opposite to and not founded on subjection to CHRIST and HIS Laws, to reform support or amend our Constitution, will be ever baffled and defeated: *for the nation and kingdom, that will not serve THEE, shall perish* [T]: and the only hope of prosperous and quiet times, is in the union and combination of PUBLIC SPIRIT with CHRISTIAN FAITH and VIRTUE.

Every good man in every station will seek the good of his country: but, as it is in a considerable measure in the power of Magistrates and Public persons to benefit the State; let every one who is invested with that honourable character be careful to acquit himself, first to God and his own heart, then to his country and constituents, for the upright acquisition and use of the power he is intrusted with by them FOR THEIR GOOD: Let him be careful to found his public character on his professed subjection to CHRIST's moral government. Let him not sacrifice to private emolument the obvi-

ous good of the community; which he must often do, in corrupt times, if ever he sacrifices his Independency; that invaluable distinction of a Magistrate, by which alone he can secure to himself the free and conscientious exercise of his lawful powers; and exert his talents in procuring for the public those real Improvements, by which (agreeable to the spirit of that famous Oath of the *Athenians* [U]) he may “ Defend
 “ and protect HIS COUNTRY AND HIS RELIGION, whether
 “ alone or in conjunction with others: he will not leave the
 “ Public in a worse condition than he found it, BUT IN A
 “ BETTER: he will be always ready to obey the Supreme
 “ Magistrate, with prudence; and to submit to the Established
 “ laws, and to all such as shall be hereafter established by
 “ full consent of the PEOPLE:— and lastly, HE WILL
 “ CONFORM TO THE NATIONAL RELIGION.”

What those Improvements are, which in the present Times an honest and christian subject would wish and pray for, it might perhaps ill become a private man to declare. Projects of amendment and of reformation, which in public characters may be productive of great blessings to the Church and State, from private men may seem presumptuous and chimerical. Yet this ‘malady of projecting to Reform the public’ hath been ever epidemical with studious and retired people; who, mere spectators of an active scene, cannot help sometimes wishing to new-model some parts of the drama before them.

[U] Apud STOBÆUM, *de Rep. Serm.* xli. as cited and translated by the most learned Bishop WARBURTON: Alliance of Ch. and St. III. 3. p. 334. and Div. Leg. II. 5.

Absolute perfection is peculiar and appropriate to God alone, the Best and Greatest: but progression improvement and melioration, ever advancing to perfection, is the proper characteristic of rational and moral creatures, either as individuals, or in civil and religious Society.

Measures of Reformation, whatever they are or may be, should be the work of a Good King, of honest Ministers, of a wise and virtuous Senate, of learned and pious Church-governours, of just and able Magistrates. And to such a Reformation, thus authorized, every private citizen throughout the state should contribute their prayers their concurrence and virtuous example. For I would observe, for the sake of those who hear these duties of Magistrates, that there are also duties on the part of the PEOPLE, which (in those happy times foretold by the Prophet) are all comprized in this short but great encomium: *Thy People also shall be all Righteous.* Private morals and personal sanctification is the true distinction of a christian subject: and the end of government is, *that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty* [W]. Were the people more attentive to this great object, than to the political contests of the times, they would not be worse governed. A disposition to censure those in power hath been ever the vice of a free people: but frequent and indiscriminate censure weakens its effect. Never was there a time, in the annals of this nation, when the spirit of defamation of all in power and office, however blameless, or of whatever principles, had so epidemically infected the minds the tongues and pens of a people once famed for their

[W] 1st Ep. to TIMOTHY, II. 2.

constitutional generosity and good-nature. This is an evil of great malignity and danger, as it is a most effectual discouragement of integrity, and confounds all distinction of character. But a disposition to violence riot and confusion is inconsistent with every blessing either of freedom or of government; inconsistent, with that perpetuity, which every good man wishes to his country.

The great obstacles to Reformation in the present age, are Luxury Corruption and Irreligion: which with some men are carried to such a highth of effrontery, as even to assert, that no Reformation is either necessary or practicable. And indeed, I fear it is impracticable, for *the ETHIOPIAN to change his skin, or the LEOPARD his spots, or for them to do good that are ACCUSTOMED TO DO EVIL* [X]: for the LUXURIOUS to cultivate private virtue; the selfish and CORRUPT to admire and assume a public spirit [Y]; or the INFIDEL to submit to the sovereignty of Christ. By such men, every attempt or effort of the honest, to check the libertinism corruption and irreligion of the times they live in, is deemed at best but a visionary and romantic project; perhaps too, an impertinent and troublesome officiousness.

To obviate all these hindrances of public virtue, the only resource of the people is in THE UNBIASSED CHOICE OF RELIGIOUS AND VIRTUOUS, WISE AND INDEPENDENT MAGISTRATES AND SENATORS. From those, who are at the head of affairs,

[X] JEREMIAH XIII. 23.

[Y] Ἄλλ' ἴσως γὰρ ὁ μέχθης, ἐκ' αἰσῶν κίματα μεταίτ'.

* Ἡ ὕδατι νίξιν θολερὰν ἰοιδίῃ πλύνθω.

Καὶ φιλοκεδέϊν, βεβλαμμένοι ἄνδρα παρῖθι.

THEOCRITUS. XVI. 60.

example.

example and influence silently or visibly descend to all subordinate ranks: and I need not observe, that That example and That influence will be generally such, as are the principles and characters of those in power and office.

Having spoke, with so much freedom and simplicity, on the progressive improvement of our national happiness; and on the means and instruments, by which it must be, if at all or ever, effected or advanced: the maxims of this discourse (in which I have attempted to retrieve a much-neglected though essential doctrine) must be left to their own truth or importance, to influence your minds in the present choice of a Chief Magistrate of this most ancient magnificent and powerful City.

If there be a Man, in whom the greatest probity and honour have been inherent and conspicuous in every station and period of his life: who, to a fund of natural and clear good sense prudence and judgment, has added the experience of business, the commerce of the world, and the most honourable functions of the Senate and Magistracy: who, undazzled by the lustre of power, reveres the constitutional exercise of it in every department of government: loyal to the King, yet independent on administration: a friend to the people, yet uninfluenced by party-spirit or the breath of popular applause: ever attentive, not to the fluctuations and changes of the times, but to those laws, which are as permanent as the constitution itself: if there be a Man, who is in principle and manners most firmly attached to the Christian Religion, and to the Civil Establishment of it in these kingdoms; together with its enlarged principles of Toleration to all, whose dissent from it is consistent with the public safety:—of such an

One,

One, my near affinity, gratitude, and personal attachment forbids me to say more, than that you have had some experience of these eminent qualities in your present Chief Magistrate and Representative. None of those, who honour and revere his virtues, would wish them to be farther engaged, in these trying times, in the arduous province of the Chief magistracy, on any other consideration than that of the public good: and, I am persuaded, no other consideration would induce him to engage any farther in so difficult a province.

On whomsoever your choice shall be placed, (and you have sufficient scope for a very worthy choice) may it be on one, who, as far as the influence of this high office extends, may contribute towards the true accomplishment of all our wishes for the public Happiness, as they are expressed in these predictions:

18. *Violence shall no more be heard in thy land,
Wasting nor destruction within thy borders;
But thou shalt call thy walls* Salvation,
And thy gates Praise. —*
21. *Thy people also shall be all righteous:
They shall inherit the land for ever,
The branch of my planting, the work of my hands,
That I may be glorified.*

A M E N!

